

THREE SERMONS, ENTITLED

I. LIBERTY WHEN USED AS A CLOKE OF
MALICIOUSNESS, THE WORST OF EVILS.

13. Dec. 1776. 17 Feb. 2. 1776 —

II. THE EVIL OF REBELLION, AS
APPLICABLE TO AMERICAN CONDUCT;
CONSIDERED. *p. 19. 17 Feb. 1776 — Nov 17. 11 —*

III. GREAT BRITAIN OPPRESSING
AMERICA, A GROUNDLESS CHARGE. *p. 37*

10. Feb. 1779 — 2 Chm 10. 9 —

Preached on the THREE preceding FAST DAYS,
appointed to be observed on Account of the

AMERICAN REBELLION;

In the PARISH CHURCHES of TWYFORD and
OUZLEBURY, HAMPSHIRE.

By CORNELIUS MURDIN, M.A. VICAR.

*O Fortunati nimium, sua si Bona norint
Agricolæ!*

VIRGIL.

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THREE STERMONS

LIBERTY WHEN THERE IS A CHOICE OF
MILITARY AND THE WORST OF THEM

AS THE FULL OF RESOLUTION, AS
APPROPRIATE TO AMERICAN CONDUCT,
CONSIDERED IN THE

INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION



AMERICAN REBELLION

is the Pacific Coast of the United States and
the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

BY CORNELIUS MURDOCH M.A. VICE.

SECRET

T H E
P R E F A C E.

IF the following discourses should be thought rather of too political a cast for the pulpit, I have only to observe that being called upon by authority, to turn my thoughts towards the American controversy, I found that if I said any thing at all upon the subject, I could not well say less; and if I have given myself rather too free a scope this way, I hope for indulgence, being led into such a train of thinking more from the occasional business of the day, than from my own inclination. A minister of the Gospel has much better subjects to employ his time about, "the love of God to man, and his becoming Christ for our sakes" (an inexhaustible fund of contemplation) than any vain contentions of men with one another. Men's disputes end in mutual hatred and animosity; but the Lord's controversy with mankind is to shew them his hatred for sin, but his love to the sinner; and therefore though I have deviated for a season, from such an acceptable theme as this, into the thorny path of politics, I hope it will be remembered, that being only an occasional writer, and forced, as it were, into the service, I shall gladly quit the field for the rest of the year, to much abler hands, and be happy to retire into the more welcome duties of my profession.

P R E F A C E.

It is almost impossible not to have some sentiment of public affairs, at such a busy time as this, but having no connection with any party, and having no hope or fear from any, I have let a few observations made upon men and things, escape me, which giving some satisfaction at the time of delivery, may possibly meet with as favourable a reception, among minds of the same unprejudiced turn, as theirs to whom I had the pleasure of addressing myself. Having no design to dictate, or to obtrude any thoughts of mine, as oracles on the public, I hope at least they will appear to be genuine, and such as naturally arose from the common occurrences of the times, as they passed in review to the observers eye; and whatever errors may be discerned therein (as doubtless on a subject, where there are so many different judgements, it would be too presumptuous to suppose ones own unexceptionable) yet if haply I may be allowed not to have erred wilfully or to serve any private purpose, 'tis all I have to ask from those that differ from me; and all the advantage I propose to derive from such a subject as this, is, from the difficulty, the ill will, the error belonging to it, to hasten away to much firmer ground, where we are liable to no mistakes, viz. that divine truth

P R E F A C E.

of "Jesus Christ being come into the world to save sinners", a truth, not depending upon men's contentions and animosities, but always the same, and always bearing a favourable aspect to them however they dislike or oppose each other: And therefore to those, who by means of such a truth as this, can learn to love God and their brother also, it will always be rest and peace to their minds, to know, whatever variance or discord there is in the world, that we are all one, and in harmony together in Christ Jesus.



**LIBERTY WHEN USED AS A CLOKE OF MALICIOUSNESS,
THE WORST OF EVILS.**

A S E R M O N,

**Preached on the FAST DAY, DECEMBER the 13th
1776, appointed to be observed on Account
of the AMERICAN REBELLION; in the Parish
Churches of TWYFORD and OUZLEBURY,
HAMPSHIRE.**

By CORNELIUS MURDIN, M. A. Vicar.

LIBERTY WHEN USED AS A CLOKE OF MALICIOUSNESS
THE WORST OF EVILS.

A S E R M O N

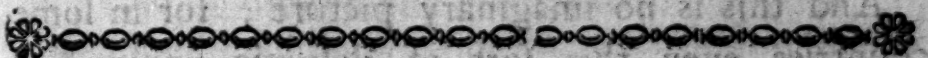
Preached on the Fast Day, December the 15th
1776, appointed to be observed on Account
of the American Rebellion; in the Parish
Churches of Twyford and Overbury,
Hampshire.

By CORNELIUS MURDIN, M. A. Vicar.



Liberty, when used as a Cloke of
Malicioufness, the worst of Evils.

1 PETER, Chap. ii. Verse 16. *As free, and not
using your Liberty for a Cloke of Malicioufness.*



LIBERTY, in itself, is a most valuable
blessing; and without which, men could
not subsist in society, with any comfort.
Suppose men to be at the will or caprice of any su-
perior power, either as to substance or life, as man-
kind are no ways to be depended on for justice and
equity; they would hold these things upon a very
precarious tenure; and whenever it suited the interest
or convenience of the ruling powers, supposing
them to be under no controul from without, mankind
would never be safe in this way, either as to goods,
or even life, if power was to be let loose upon us,
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In such a general unconfined manner as this. This would be the highest species of tyranny, which could well be imagined, to live at the mercy of our fellow creature, so that if he pleased to make any thing belonging to us, his own, or if we were so unfortunate as to displease him, he could remove us from every connection or tie, which holds us among men, or dispose of our life, either to gratify his interest or revenge, however necessary it might be to ourselves or others.

And this is no imaginary picture ; for in some countries even this sort of 'despotic power and arbitrariness prevails, so that men are every moment liable to know every sort of oppression, whenever it suits the will of pride or avarice, or even caprice, to exercise it towards those who are so unfortunate to be subject to them.

The dread of this and the fatal consequences of unlimited power, has led men to circumscribe power by law, *i. e.* to give some security to the subject, that neither his life or goods shall be at the disposal of another, than as he may happen to forfeit them by the equitable sentence or judgement of the community at large, against him: Here in this country, power seems to be so well
tempered

tempered by law, that ministers must proceed very artfully indeed, to make any considerable invasions upon the rights of mankind. There is such a jealousy against any encroachments of this kind, and such a latitude of thought very justly allowed amongst us, that it would not be very easy for the worst of governors, to make any material alteration in the constitution, so as we could receive much hurt or damage thereby. Was any one to deny us the protection of the laws, so as we could not sue for justice, or be sued for any injustice, it would not, and indeed ought not long to be borne in such a quick-sighted penetrating nation as this. Should any violence be offered to the conscience, so that men should be compelled to think as the state does, and no freedom of judgement allowed in religious matters, the alarm would soon become general, and men would not want to be told, that such an infringement as this, upon the liberty of the mind, is the mark of a tyranic oppressive hand over them. Now in a country where the law has its free course, and conscience is easy, so that a man may profess any religion, or indeed be of no religion at all, if he pleases, it is plain the main things are right, and none need be under any great apprehensions from such a government as this. To expect that no sort of abuses

will creep in, and that men will not grasp at more places of profit and advantage, than belong to them, or that the deserving and honest will never be overlooked or unemployed, is too much to expect from human government, and is a perfection which can only subsist in idea. If the main things are right, and property and conscience well secured, it shews a restlessness and impatience of spirit, to cavil at lesser evils, which will unavoidably arise in the best concerted form of government whatever. If the laws of a state have effectually secured our greatest privileges, liberty of body and mind, we may well rest satisfied with some lesser inconveniences, which will unavoidably follow all human affairs.

Whenever the exigencies of a state require the assistance of its subjects, there must always be supposed to reside a power in the state, to demand such assistance, and to enforce obedience to every requisition of this kind. For to suppose protection, and the enjoyment of liberty, where no contribution or assistance can be enforced, is absurd and ridiculous to the last degree. Government must be supported, and that support must come from the purse of the subject: And provided these demands are not imposed in an arbitrary manner, by the will of any one
part

part of the state, but by the joint deliberate voice of the nation met together in legal assembly, there does not seem much to complain of, in such a proceeding as this. This very natural idea, all parties in this country very quietly acquiesced in, 'till government thought proper, at no very distant period, to lay a tax upon its American subjects towards easing the necessities of the state. This nation had long borne an enormous weight of debt, and though incurred in a great measure on their account, without requiring any contribution on the part of the Americans. Their growing infant state, had hitherto exempted them from any pecuniary requisition; but now being come to a considerable height, both as to wealth, and numbers, and commerce, so as to vie with the parent state itself, in these particulars, it was thought advisable to call upon them, for bearing a part in the common burthen, and to contribute a moderate share of assistance, in return for the flourishing condition they were in, owing to their connection, and alliance with the mother-country. Well, where was the harm of this? Were not the Americans the subjects of this kingdom, as well as any individual within it? And could any person see the mischief of requiring a common proportion of succour from all the parts of the empire? That

as all the parts equally enjoyed the benefit of protection, both as to property and conscience, so it did not seem unreasonable, that whenever the legislature thought it expedient for the public good, that its distant subjects, as well as those nearer home, should bear a share in the common necessities of the state, but that they would immediately comply, and suffer the parliament to act for them, as well as for the other parts of the empire.

Happy for both countries, if the Americans had suffered themselves to think in this manner. But in a free country, where there will always be opposition to public measures, sometimes out of principle, but more frequently out of pique to people in power, and to get themselves and dependants seated in their places ; so it happened at this time, a junto of disappointed courtiers, aided by a desperate faction amongst us, took the alarm and soon perceived, that if government went on at this rate, of quietly raising a revenue upon the American continent, that their favourite scheme of distressing administration, and thereby getting into power would be at an end ; and consequently themselves lose their importance, and what perhaps, they valued more, the places and honours they so eagerly sought after

after. But how to accomplish this necessary work? They must not avow too publicly, that the Americans were but under agents in this business, and that their scheme was through them, to get at power, whatever consequence, or whatever ruin fell upon both countries, in the prosecution of this design. No, it was necessary to go to work, more covertly than all this; and as liberty is the cry, which all men are fond of in this country, as well as in America, so it was necessary to make a great stir about liberty, as if that was in danger, and using liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, they tried to make people here, as well as the Americans believe, that by laying a tax upon them, they were going to be enslaved, and that this was only a prelude to some after-stroke, and that if they submitted now, all sorts of oppression both of body and mind, would undoubtedly follow.

Unhappily for the peace of both nations, the Americans shewed themselves but too apt disciples of such teachers as these. Being arrived to a summit of riches and strength, they wanted a pretence to shake off a dependance upon the mother country, or at least to be only nominally connected with her, and only subject but just as far
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as they thought proper. No wonder under these circumstances, they should so greedily catch the idea held out to them from hence, that their liberties were at an end, and that every species of oppression was preparing for them, if they once submitted to this hateful plan of raising a revenue upon them, by means of any kind of taxation whatever. And why so? Are not the Americans, subjects of this kingdom? Or did this country ever by any formal act of theirs, relinquish its authority over them? No such thing as this was ever pretended; but then, they are not represented in parliament, and having no voice in the choice of representatives, the demand is made upon them without their consent, and consequently arbitrary and illegal. The demand made upon them, without their consent? Why, are they not subjects; and is it possible to be a subject of this kingdom, without being represented? The choice indeed of the representative is by the constitution, in a select number, but when chosen, he is not only a representative for that particular borough, or county, for which he is chosen, but for the empire at large, and wherever there is a subject in the whole extended empire, he is chosen to act for him, in every thing which relates to government, as well as for his particular county or borough.

How

How else could the legislature lay taxes which affect much the majority of this country, and according to this idea, as much without their act or consent as the most distant parts of America? The only reason which can be given, is, that the constitution has lodged the power of choosing in the freeholders, but when the choice is made, he becomes the representative of the empire, and not merely of any spot or parcel of men within it. And that this is a very right idea of this matter, is plain from hence, that we never heard of any murmurings or risings of people upon this account, but all have very quietly acquiesced in the notion of being represented in the general representation of the kingdom. And I suppose there is hardly a person in this nation, but allows the force of such reasoning as this, when applied to a representative, not being chosen for a particular borough or shire, but for the kingdom at large. And why the same sort of reasoning will not extend to America, that the legislature when legally appointed, must not act for the whole body of subjects, and not merely for particular districts, is not very easy, but rather forced and unnatural to conceive. Indeed if the Americans had thought fit to apply to the legislature, that as their numbers and

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wealth,

wealth, made them now a very considerable people, and therefore, if they could be permitted to send deputies of their own to parliament, (as none could be such proper judges of the internal mode of levying taxes upon them, as themselves, though they did not pretend to dispute the authority of parliament, as things stood at present, but only they wanted relief, and consideration to be had to their powerful state and condition;) I do not know, I say, that such a petition as this could or ought to be rejected. But to fly to arms, without ever wishing to settle or debate this matter in the least, is such an high contempt of this nation, in its legislative capacity, as no wonder it has produced all the dreadful consequences to both countries, we have already been witnesses of, besides what more may still ensue from this unnatural struggle subsisting between us.

And will nothing still the noise of war, but destructions must still stalk along upon the earth? Yes. Only acknowledge the authority of the three branches of this kingdom, *i. e.* only become subjects, with the same privileges, which have heretofore made you great, and the sword of war is sheathed, and peace and amity open their welcome arms to receive you from all the calamities

lamicities and horror of war. Surely such a condition as this, will not always be rejected, and we shall hear of something more pleasing, than thousands of deluded men, sacrificed to the ambition of a few desperate leaders, who to shelter themselves, and their own violent proceedings, are running headlong from the shadow of oppression, into all the realities of a most tyrannic republic. For wherever Liberty is, we cannot suppose it to reside in America, where none are allowed to express their sentiments, if the least contrary to the complection of the times, or even to remain neuter, without the most brutal indignities being offered them, besides a manifest hazard of their lives and fortunes.

The church of England has particularly suffered in these times of confusion, because the members of that communion, knowing the happiness they enjoy under a mild government, are very unwilling to exchange these blessings, for the arbitrary persecuting zeal of hot-headed fanatics; and therefore the ministers of the established church, have undergone much distress from the intemperate fury of their bigotted neighbours: Witness the noble contributions, made in this country, by the right reverend the bishops and

clergy, together with the nobility and gentry, for their relief. Surely we shall hear at length of some accommodation taking place between these distracted nations, and commerce and peace once more to lift up their heads amongst us. For what can either side gain in this unnatural quarrel? If America should succeed in this contest, I believe, it would be the worst misfortune that could befall her; for then, as it is easy to foresee, the puritanical calvinistic set getting the ascendant, they would rule with such unbridled fury, that the rest feeling the weight of their truly despotic sway, would apply to the first power, that would offer to deliver them from their intestine oppressors. But would they only return to the condition of subjects, law and liberty would return with them, which they have sadly exchanged for the calamities of war.

* The signal successes of his Majesty's arms, seem to promise a happy issue of these troubles, from the usual valour and intrepidity of our fleets and armies; but we are unwilling to terminate this business by the sword

* The defeat upon Long Island, the taking of New York, the surrender of King's Bridge, &c.

sword, we want reconciliation, we want harmony to grow up between these divided brothers; to this end, we humble ourselves before the Lord, as at this time, beseeching him to incline the hearts of both people to a speedy and amicable agreement with each other, and that the Americans may look upon us as friends, ready to pity and forgive, and do all in our power to relieve them ; rather than force us to continue enemies where we cannot but grudge and be sorry for every advantage we have against them. And may the next victory we hear from thence, be not of arms, but of brotherly love striving to out-do each other, in all the marks and tokens of a true, sincere, and lasting friendship.



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THE EVIL OF REBELLION, AS APPLICABLE TO
AMERICAN CONDUCT, CONSIDERED.

A S E R M O N,

Preached on the FAST DAY, FEBRUARY the 17th
1778. being the Day appointed to be observed on
Account of the AMERICAN REBELLION ; in the
Parish Churches of TWYFORD and OUZLEBURY,
HAMPSHIRE.

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A S E R M O N,

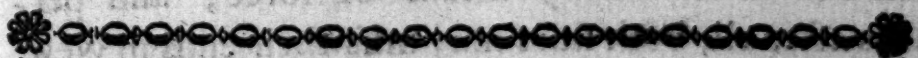
Preached on the Fast Day, FEBRUARY the 17th
1778, being the Day appointed to be observed on
Account of the AMERICAN REBELLION; in the
Pious Churches of TWYFORD and OUSEBURY,
Hampshire.

By CORNELIUS MURDIN, M. A. Vicar.



The Evil of Rebellion, as Applicable to American Conduct, considered.

PROVERBS, Chap. xvii, Verse 11. *An Evil Man seeketh only Rebellion, therefore a cruel Messenger shall be sent against Him.*



TH A T rebellion is a crime of no small magnitude, will, I suppose, be universally allowed; and that it takes its rise from the wickedness and delinquency of human nature, cannot, I imagine, be easily disputed; for though people, that rise in opposition to legal government, generally pretend some real grievance or oppression, to justify their proceedings, ye it too often happens,

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that

that their own passions, or the artifice of others, are the true beginnings of every violence of this sort, and the oppressions and hardships complained of, are only false colourings, which insensibly betray themselves and others, into all the mischiefs unavoidably annexed to such unnatural struggles.

Did men but duly weigh the consequences, belonging to an hasty opposition, to lawful authority, they would try every expedient of redress, rather than come to such extremities as must involve themselves and country, in every species of misfortune, before such a dispute as this can be settled by means of force; and perhaps after all, both sides may miss their ends in view, and all the satisfaction they may obtain, may be only the miserable prospect of seeing the ruin and calamity attendant on both. Be this as it may, every government legally constituted, must support its own authority, and must enforce its laws and statutes, by such power, as God and nature have put into their hands; and therefore to rise against such a power as this, upon light and trivial grounds, must

must bring a train of evils with it, which few would chuse to under-go, could they have foreseen, what dreadful calamities await on their doings.

When men first set out in rebellion, like all other people intent upon a change, they promise themselves great matters, from striving to better their condition, they picture to themselves some flattering idea of something at a distance, which they are impatient to realize; and perhaps being buoyed up, by artful designing men, who want to profit by the disorder and trouble of the times, the flame is lighted up, and nothing but a contention with the adverse power, will satisfy such minds as these. Their numbers appear to them exhaustless, their resources, without a possibility of failing, and supposing them to triumph in the end, they shall never know grievance or difficulty more. These are the smooth specious prospects, which men, intent upon a change are willing to cherish. If they have liberty, if they have wealth, if they have commerce in the greatest extent, they will have something *more* than these; they will to refine upon liberty, that it shall not mean an obedience to the laws, but to do what wantonness and fancy

shall suggest ; and though they abound in wealth and plenty, they will suppose, that it is possible for each to have a larger share of these, if they could but introduce disorder and confusion ; and that commerce must thrive best, in a state of tumult and distraction.

These were some of the airy dreams, which filled the heads of the Americans, in the first setting out of this unnatural contest which subsists between us. They had the laws in the fullest extent, and property and life were secured to them in as ample a manner as they could wish. No one could infringe on another's rights, without being liable to answer, for every violation of this sort, before an impartial judicature ; and as to that liberty of conscience, which every man has a right to, none had it in a fuller manner than they ; none were compelled to think, as the majority does ; but every man exercised his judgement in religious matters, and was allowed both to preach and to receive whatever doctrine, he thought most agreeable to truth.*

But

* In this light I look upon the law lately passed for repealing the penal statutes against the papists, to proceed upon the most liberal plan, allowing to the papists, what we take to ourselves, the liberty of chusing our own religion ; and if the legislature sees any security to be necessary from them, let them be left to

But perhaps their wealth was upon the decline, and they were going to lose some of the sources, by which they had rose to such a considerable height ; or their commerce was going to be so clogged and interrupted, that they could not pursue it but to feed the avarice of others, rather than to enrich and benefit themselves. No, none of these reasons were ever pretended, as moving causes in the present rebellion. If there had been any such complaints as these, perhaps by a proper representation, they might have found redress ; for certainly it would have been more prudent, to have laid a fair state of their grievances, before government, and to have tried the softer arts of supplication, rather than to be judge and party in their own cause themselves, and to determine to decide all controversy by the point of the sword. The sword is but a bad arbiter in such

cases
that ; but for private people to want any set of men to be under penal statutes upon account of their faith, is betraying the cause of truth to the greatest degree, as if that was not sufficient against error, without the help of force ; and supposing mankind to be unconvinced even by truth itself, what can they deserve at our hands, but pity and forbearance, and further instruction, instead of fines and imprisonment, which however they may distress the body, leave the mind just as it was before ? And would not every coercion of this sort, be imitating the papists themselves, who use force in countries, where they have power, because they are justly afraid of argument ?

cases, and generally brings ruin upon those that use it. But what was that insufferable evil, which could not stand the test of a cool deliberate enquiry, but must at all events be determined by the sword? Surely the Americans were going to be so oppressed in mind and body, that they could neither think or act like men, but were to be denied all the privileges of human nature; for nothing less than this, I think, could well justify the taking up of arms, and involving a country in anarchy and bloodshed: and even then, perhaps, the advantages which might be gained thereby, might be purchased full dear at the expence of the lives, the misery and distress of thousands of unhappy sufferers. But what was, I say, this mighty gigantic foe, which could not be quelled, but by "a cruel messenger being sent against him"? It was not conscience, it was not commerce, these they had in as full enjoyment as they could possibly desire. It was *liberty*; liberty was in danger. This nation was going to enslave them, by laying a tax upon them, in common with the other subjects of the empire. Loaded with an enormous debt, and that contracted in a great measure, for the service and protection of America, the legislature looking upon the American flourishing state and condition

condition, owing to the nourishing parent hand of this nation, thought it advisable to call upon them, as subjects, for a small return of the numerous favours, so willingly and lavishly afforded them by the mother country. No man at that time, ever imagined, but such a power as this, must lodge in the constitution, to require assistance from its subjects, as well as to afford protection. But here was the misfortune, we had a set of uneasy dissatisfied spirits amongst us, who had tasted the sweets of power, but through unpopularity, and an unaptness for business, were laid aside, and to their great regret, without place, and without employment. These men, intent upon gaining the posts of honour and preferment, they had in view, could not endure that government should quietly raise a revenue upon the American continent, which in time might indemnify us for the immense fund of treasure, employed in rearing her to her present maturity, and in defending and clearing her from her enemies; and by a regular intercourse of this sort, this nation might probably shake off some of that heavy load that lay upon her, and America by contributing to her necessities, (which the then happy condition of her affairs, very
well

well enabled her to do) might not only pay a debt of gratitude, but find it her interest to strengthen the hands of the mother country, which would come with tenfold recompence, both in point of trade and protection upon themselves,

But we had a set of men amongst us, that could not bear such a prospect; they sickened at the sight! What! America pouring in the superfluity of her wealth upon this country, and this country finding a resource, in the growing numbers and affluence of the Americans, and thereby be enabled to assume its proper figure and importance among the nations? It was a measure not to be bore with, there was such a manifest advantage, plainly opening upon both countries; that what must become of them, and the power they so inwardly thirsted after, if such a system as this went on easily and without interruption, to the mutual benefit of both nations? could no opportunity be taken for thwarting such a scheme as this, by attending to, and improving the turbulent spirit of the Americans? They had shewn a sufficient disposition to tumult and riot upon many occasions; they had too plainly manifested a passion for revolt
and

and disobedience, for the discontented and ambitious here, not to know that if they could but furnish them, with a proper lesson, some plausible ground of discord and opposition, they would be the fittest agents for them, to ascend the hill of power by their means, however fatal such a step might be, to the peace and welfare of both countries.

A Tax without representation! This was the mighty weapon which was brandished through all corners, to make the Americans catch the idea, and improve their turbulence into an actual revolt. They were too apt scholars in the school of rebellion, not to learn and pursue the maxims, their masters had set them. In the midst of the enjoyment of the goods of mind and body, they could not well find an handle for faction and discontent: Prosperity, it is true, and a constant flow of ease and success, had made them giddy and insolent, but still there was no fair opening for actual revolt. But now to be informed from hence by men of no small abilities and character embarked in opposition to public measures, that to pay a tax, without a voice in the house of parlia-

ment

ment, was illegal and arbitrary, was too welcome a sound, not to be received with the utmost alacrity and satisfaction. The Americans were too well prepared for tumult and disobedience, not to see and feel the force of such an idea as this. It was only displaying the injustice of forcing them to contribute their quota, towards the exigencies of government, without their consent, and without their having delegates in parliament, and the speciousness of such a pretence as this, would be a sufficient colour, for all the violent proceedings, they were henceforward determined to enter into.

In vain was it to alledge, that the Americans were as much represented, as the far greater part of this Kingdom, who quietly acquiesced in the general representation of the whole, and never dreamt, but a select body of men, might chuse a representative, who should act for the rest, without any infringement of their rights and priveleges. And why the same Idea, of the supreme power, being lodged in a body of men, for the good of the empire at large, should not extend *throughout*, and to every part of the empire alike, is not easy to imagine.

gine. The truth is, they were determined to hear no voice, but the voice of war, and to listen to no messenger, but "*that cruel messenger which should be sent against them.*" Well, they have at length provoked this cruel messenger; they have seen blood and slaughter stalk around, they have seen their cities stormed, their towns burnt, and their country made a scene of desolation and horror. And for what? Why, because they will not be subjects, they will not allow, that the governing part of the kingdom, is to govern for all the remote parts of the empire, as well as for those immediately under their eye at home. Supposing the Americans wanted their assemblies to have a considerable share in raising the supplies required of them; or even supposing that considering their growing bulk and magnitude, it would be fitting for them to have a place in the assembly of parliament, I dont know, I say, that such a request as this, could or ought to be rejected. Such a petition as this, and I am persuaded, any thing they could reasonably desire, would now and at all times have been attended to. But they have set up an independent empire, they have thrown off all allegiance to this country, they have barred up

all the avenues of peace and amity ; and now what is there left for us to do, but to send a *cruel messenger* against them, who were resolved to hear no other voice but this ? The success of this cruel messenger, war, has not yet completed his majesty's gracious purpose, of giving peace to his deluded subjects, beyond the atlantic ; * an unfortunate miscarriage in part of the army destined for this salutary purpose, has retarded, 'tis to be feared any overtures for an accommodation. But what a fair opportunity was here given, if the American leaders were inclined to profit by it, to have some favourable concessions made to them, and by a mutual advance on both sides, to have healed the breach between us ? But no, victory is so unusual a thing with them, that elated with a little temporary success, they do not know how to descend to the level of moderation, and nothing but romance and glory take place in their minds, but alas, little did the people of America imagine, how such an event as this would operate here at home ; it has roused the spirit of the nation to unite in their offers of bounties and premiums for raising men for the service of government, and

that

* Burgoyne's defeat.

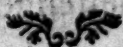
that in such an uncommon degree of generosity and profusion, as plainly to shew the sense of the generality, to support his majesty, at all events, against the designs of his rebellious colonies: And what has raised the spirits of the well-affected, has proportionably damped the minds of the opposite party, who have employed all their strength and argument, to hinder by some chicane of law*, what they foresaw, must soon have the most happy effects, the almost concurrent voice of the nation, to give their fortunes as well as their lives, to help his majesty to bring his subjects to a due subordination to the laws and constitution. Hitherto the addresses of the well-affected offering their lives and fortunes, for the defence of his majesty's and the nation's rights, had been ridiculed as vain and chimerical, and no ways to be depended on, in the hour of need; but when they come to be realised, and a spirit of giving, gone forth, which nothing could restrain; what could those in opposition do, but as they had hitherto attempted to make us believe, that raising money by taxes, was illegal, so now it was equally illegal, to

* Alluding to the debates in the house at this time, about the unlawfulness of these sort of subscriptions.

to give voluntarily any part of our property for the defence and maintenance of his majesty's government. The fate of such fruitless efforts, will, we hope, convince the Americans, how little they can rely upon the endeavours of a faction amongst us to serve them, and that in effect, all such people who would weaken the hands of government, in quashing the American rebellion, and thereby bring them to their former state of peace and happiness, are really neither friends to Great Britain, or America, but only wish well to themselves, at the expence of both.

And here let us make a pause, and consider how different God deals with his rebellious creatures, in comparison of men's dealing with one another. We are all in rebellion against God, and have all a nature, which prompts us to act contrary to him and his laws. Well, does he send a cruel messenger against us, to threaten his adversaries with hell and perdition? No, this cruel messenger is sent against sin, *which he is resolved to bear himself*; but the sinner has a messenger of peace sent to him, saying, "Son thy sins are forgiven thee," thy nature is made whole

whole by union with mine ;" and though we know him not, and believe not his words, upon account of that cloud of flesh, which he wears here below, yet his prayers are all in our favour ; and however unworthily we behave to him, (as God knows, our behaviour is very little to be accounted of) yet he is resolved to get the better of our rebellion, by pity, by loving-kindness, by good will, and so shew himself our God and our saviour to all eternity. May this day's humbling ourselves before him, bring us to a sight of this, and that the cruel messenger sent against the Americans, may be speedily changed into a messenger of peace and reconciliation, by having the hearts of both sides, turned to a mutual harmony and agreement, God of his infinite mercy, &c.



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him not, and believe not his words, upon account
of that cloud of flesh, which he wears here below,
yet his prayers are all in our favour; and however
unworthily we behave to him, (as God knows, our
behaviour is very little to be accounted of) yet he is
resolved to get the better of our rebellion, by pity,
by loving-kindness, by good will, and to show him-
self our God and our saviour to all eternity. May
this day's humbling ourselves before him, bring us
to a sight of this, and that the great messenger sent
against the Americans, may be speedily changed
into a messenger of peace and reconciliation, by
having the hearts of both sides turned to a
mutual harmony and agreement. God of his infinite
mercy, preserve the peace, and unite the hearts of
all his people, and let the love of God be the
bond of perfect union between us. Amen.

GREAT BRITAIN OPPRESSING AMERICA, A
GROUNDLESS CHARGE,

A S E R M O N,

Preached on FEBRUARY the 10th 1779. being the
FAST DAY, appointed to be observed on Account
of the AMERICAN REBELLION; in the Parish
Churches of TWYFORD and OUZLEBURY,
HAMPSHIRE.

By CORNELIUS MURDIN, M. A. VICAR.

GREAT BRITAIN OPRESSING AMERICA,
OR CORNELIUS' CHARGE.

A S E R M O N

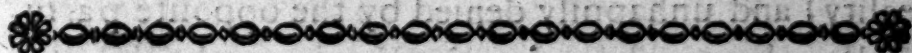
Preached on February the 10th 1779. being the
Fast Day, appointed to be observed on Account
of the American Rebellion; in the Parish
Church of Twyford and Overbury,
Hampshire.

BY CORNELIUS MORDIN, M. A. Vicar.



Great Britain oppressing America, a groundless Charge.

2 CHRONICLES, Chap. xx, Verse 9. *If Evil come upon us, as the Sword of Judgement, or Pestilence, or Famine, we will Stand before this House, and in thy Presence (for thy Name is in this House) and we will cry unto thee in our Affliction, and thou wilt hear and help.*



WHAT a terrible scourge is war! A fury
let loose to desolate countries and nations,
without mercy, and without controul!
Whence could arise such a plague to trouble the
world, but from the contending passions of man-
kind, who will not hear the voice of equity and
reason? One party will have, what the other will
not.

not grant, and there being no mediator, or third person, to judge and determine the differences between them, with moderation and candour, all is left to the sword, which is a very cruel arbiter, who without weighing the merits, always gives the cause to the strongest.

Had the Americans considered this matter sufficiently, would they have been over-fond of trusting to such a decision as this, which only brings ruin and desolation with it, and leaves the matter just as it was at first? Here was a right exercised by this country, of levying a contribution upon its subjects, (which all Governments must be possessed of, otherwise they have only a shadow of power, without any reality) and unhappily denied by the opposite party. Well, what must be done? Was it worth while for the Americans, to try what could be done by force, before they had born a little with the supposed grievance, and waited for a more seasonable opportunity of redress? Here was no stretch upon their conscience, here was nothing intended against them, as men, and as christians, but every one was left in the full enjoyment of the liberty of the mind, which all

all have a right to, and toleration and indulgence were in as full extent as they could desire. Men are very justly jealous of the privilege of thinking, and can hardly brook any restraint upon the freedom of conscience; and not to let mankind have their own judgement in religious matters, is often productive of very bad consequences. For religion being supposed to shew mankind the way to heaven, not to let them have that way, which seems to be the best, and safest for the purpose, is an intolerable grievance, and often produces the greatest animosities.

Now nothing of this was ever pretended among the Americans; their ancestors indeed had fled from this country, to enjoy the blessing of a free undisturbed conscience, in the *wilds* of America; and our governors were too well informed, and too well enlightened in the present day, ever to think of violating the rights of humane nature, by any such oppression, as had already driven them to seek freedom of thought, in a new world. However hardly they had been dealt with, in these respects, by the rulers of former times, the present set of people in power (to their honour be it spoken) were far from

following

following such a narrow illiberal plan as this. They knew very well that the mind has its rights, as well as the body, and that the exercise of the judgement in what concerns our most important interests, must be left sacred and untouched ; and that in a political as well religious consideration, none are like to prove such good subjects, as those who are left to follow the dictates of conscience, free and unmolested.

This privilege therefore, the Americans enjoyed to their happiness and content, and being thus freed from any fears of an usurping hand of power, over their minds, they followed the several occupations, which necessity and interest led them to, with cheerfulness and delight ; and being situated in a country, open to a vast field of industry, from the fertile invention of man, they cultivated the arts and sciences, which their several genius' prompted them to, with such success and rapidity, as not only to supply themselves, with the necessaries and conveniencies of life, but to have a stock sufficient for the purposes of trade and intercourse with others. To this end the ocean, which served them as a boundary, presented its large extensive bosom, for transporting

transporting their ships, which their industry soon raised, to the various parts of the world. Hence grew an amazing traffic, which enriched them in process of time, to a surprising degree ; and by populousness, and an attention to the arts of civil life, they were lately become a considerable people.

Nor was this country less desirous than themselves, that they should enjoy the fruits of their industry, and "each sit down under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree," to gather the fruits which their own hands had raised. Every encouragement, all sorts of bounties were granted them from hence, to help them on in their prosperous career, and nothing was thought too much to protect and support them, in their well-earned labours.

When a war broke out, some years ago, big with great mischief and annoyance to them, from that very nation, whom they have now adopted as their friends, how soon did Great Britain fly to their assistance, and like a kind parent put forth her friendly arm, to shelter them in time of danger ? No sooner was the danger known, but her fleets and armies appeared

appeared on their coasts, and effectually secured them from the hostile attempts of the enemy; so that they lived in peace and prosperity, while the powerful navy of Great Britain rode triumphant, Herself happily pleased with a vast expence of men and treasure, to give her sons at any rate such a blessing as this.

Not content with barely protecting and securing them from harm, the spirit of this country went further, they considered that the French being situated at the back of them in Canada, would be able at any time to distress and annoy them, and by making incursions upon them, from a chain of forts behind, might in time, if not wholly over run and ruin them; yet at least hurt and interrupt them at their pleasure.

This produced that noble enterprize, the reduction of Quebec, together with all Canada, and by that means the colonies saw themselves freed from this intestine foe, and instead of of an enemy ready to fall upon them, whenever an opportunity offered, they found themselves enclosed by the protecting arm of Britain, which surrounded their possessions and covered

covered them with their wings ; while their enemies, and those that were continually meditating evil against them, were quickly removed out of their sight,

Well, could any set of people, after being favoured by this nation for such a long series of years, which spared neither men nor treasure, but lavished both, to do them good ; could any people, I say, take it into their heads, that government, after loading this nation with an enormous debt, to succour and sustain them, was going all at once to oppress and enslave them ? That she, who so lately had lent every aid, in her power, to raise these Americans, to their late envied state of maturity, should all of a sudden go to ruin her own work, and tumble them down from their height, just to satisfy the greedy minds of a few avaritious ministers, who wanted to fatten upon the spoils of an oppressed country ; while the rest of the nation sat idle spectators, or else hoping to share in the plunder that was devised against them ?

This was the inconsistency charged upon this nation ; first, to nourish and foster a people, till they

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became

became considerable, and then that government should so poison and corrupt the minds of men, as to make them join in wishing to see this very people, reduced to the most abject state of dependance, and their goods and substance a prey, to the devouring hand of power, whenever it should please to call for them !

This was the picture held out to the world, to make mankind believe, that such a foolish as well as wicked part as this was acting against them ; for if the Americans owned the authority of this country, this authority some time or other, might be used to oppress them ; and therefore it was best to resist in time, and then they had nothing to fear for the time to come !

These were some of the airy speculative ideas, upon which the present opposition to government, on the part of America, was first built ; they did not pretend there was any injustice in itself, in a state requiring assistance from its subjects, or any great oppression in the sum required of them ; but they did not care to allow the right, they did not care to allow

allow the legislative authority of this country, to have any other power, but to give and bestow in as profuse a manner as they pleased; and that when they had almost ruined themselves by giving, that it was tyranny and death, to receive any thing back in return.

This was the language, and these were the sentiments, which have kindled the flame of discord in both countries; one country thought they had a power to demand a supply from its subjects, as well as to afford protection; and the other thought it right, to oppose the first instance of power, whether right or wrong, for fear they should be oppressed by it, fifty or sixty years hence; and so involved both countries in a civil war, not because they were now oppressed (for none were so flourishing) but for fear if they yielded in the least to power, that power a century or two hence, might overwhelm and destroy them!

But why not wait for some favourable change of ministry, who might meet their wishes, and second their views better than the present? Ministers are

not such a long-lived race of men that we should despair of ever seeing an end of them: They are pretty much like the flowers of the field, gay and flourishing for a season, and like them soon wither and decay; so that if the Americans had complied a little at first, possibly a new set of ministers, (which is not the most uncommon thing to happen) might be better inclined to redress their supposed grievances, and give them the satisfaction they wanted; and so all the calamities of war and bloodshed, have been hapily prevented.

This would have been with the trial, to have paused a little, before they came to extremities, to see if any of their friends here, which filled them with such great expectations of the justice and righteousness of their cause, could have come into power, and so have set them at ease, and gratified their desires, without any of the horrible consequences which have since followed.

But this was not at all to their mind; the opposition when in power, had framed that very act, which gave Great Britain, a right of supply and taxation

ation over the colonies, and though they were so inconsistent as to oppose their own act for the present, yet America could not always hope, that their friends would be of the mind, that this country should have no rights, but to waste its best blood and treasure in their defence, and that their right was, to refuse whatever assistance should be required of them. And therefore though the Americans were pleased with the interruption of public measures, thrown in the way of government by opposition, yet they were rather dubious of them at bottom ; they were afraid, their friendship would not go all the lengths with them, which they aimed at ; they had a great idol in view, *Independence*, and that not from any desirableness in the thing itself, but which, from a giddiness and insolence of wealth and they were determined to have, though it should be power, for the worst. And this raising an obscure set of people into power, there was an end of all further accommodation, because if any terms were accepted (and such terms were offered last summer, as their most enlarged wishes, could hardly ever have hoped for) and which their almost ruined country, one would think, would have forced them to accept ; But no, if they are put into possession, of what they
have

have amused the world with striving for ; what becomes of the congress, what becomes of the great and mighty tradesmen, raised into petty monarchs ? All their power crumbles into dust, if once the state hears the voice of equity and reason ; and therefore as some of these great men are made princes, others must be sent ambassadors to foreign courts, to solicit an assistance to support their power, and to protect their religion and liberties, which the unnatural parent Great Britain wants to overthrow.

Undoubtedly the court of France, the ancient enemy of these kingdoms, will not be backward at such a time as this, to close with American desperation, to distress this nation, and to encrease the troubles, which this intestine division has occasioned. The injuries France had sustained from the powerful arm of Britain, the last war, were too fresh in their memory, not to be desirous of so favourable a moment, to strengthen the hands of the rebellious colonies, to help them to throw off their dependance upon this country, and to make them subservient in the end to the interests of France.

But

But this is a matter now under trial, and whether France and her new associates, will not have cause to repent of this alliance, from the enterprising spirit of this nation, weakened into a due sense of the indignities she has received, time alone must discover. And if we may be allowed to augur any good from the more than probable account we have had* of the revolt of some of the southern provinces from the American yoke, and the present weakened state of their army, we may hope that the period is not very distant, when America may be glad to welcome that allegiance, which in the hour of her infatuation she has despised, and which, perhaps, may be the more welcome, for having not deserved it.

To recover such a blessing as this, both to ourselves and them, we are now met according to the advice of the text in the presence of the Lord, and may we find the fruit of our humbling ourselves before him
in

* The successes at Georgia, and the expectations of the same at Carolina, together with the favourable appearances in the West Indies, were not known at the time of writing this, and which we hope, will come in aid of this observation.

in his name and in his house, and deploring our iniquities which have brought these evils upon us, to be, what King Jehosaphat found true in the same circumstances, viz. that when we cry unto the Lord, in our affliction, he will hear and help, and put an end to the devouring sword, by granting to both nations, too long wearied with destructions, a safe, lasting, and honourable peace; and may our next meeting by authority be, not to hear of wars or rumours of wars, but a day of thanksgiving for restoring harmony and concord to these divided nations,

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